

<i>NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE PD 05-102 EFFECTIVE DATE SEPTEMBER 21, 2012</i>	
CONSTITUENT SERVICES	
<i>NOAA FISHERIES SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</i>	
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<i>SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:</i>	

NOAA Fisheries Social Media Policy

Introduction: Social media provides a powerful set of modern communications tools for engaging target audiences and amplifying messaging for NOAA Fisheries. Specific social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, Hootsuite) have been approved by the Department of Commerce (DOC) for use by its sub-agencies and by extension, the individual line offices, including NOAA Fisheries. Currently, DOC’s policy on the [Approval and Use of Social Media and Web 2.0](#) provides specific guidance for operating units and Commerce employees on the use of social media and paves the way for employees to take full advantage of social media and Web 2.0 platforms in their professional capacity. At the same time, the policy protects Commerce and its employees from the risks inherent in using these services without the proper approvals and safeguards in place.

Objective: The NOAA Fisheries Social Media Policy is intended to complement the DOC policy and provide additional policy guidance for NOAA Fisheries staff on the approval and use of social media and Web 2.0 platforms. The policy also provides specifics on the management and use of those platforms by Fisheries staff to maintain consistency in how we use these tools.

Authorities and Responsibilities: This policy directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

NOAA Fisheries Communication and Office and the DOC:

- The *NOAA Fisheries Social Media Policy* and the management of [national social media accounts](#) are the responsibility of the NOAA Fisheries Communications and External Affairs Office and all social media activities must align with, support, and complement the [Department of Commerce’s Social Media Policy](#) (Dec 2010).
- All Fisheries social media platforms are for official agency use—**not** personal use. When an employee posts content to a Fisheries social media channel, they are acting in an official capacity on behalf of the agency (see [DOC policy](#) for more details).

Guidance on Use: (For additional guidelines please see supplements on How to Contribute and How to Participate)

- Fisheries social media content should be factual and reflect the agency's position, policies, findings, and information.
- The audience for all Fisheries social media channels is the general public so the information posted should be in plain English and non-technical.

Program Office, Regional Office, Science Center, and HQ Responsibilities:

- The Fisheries Communications Office at headquarters will manage the approval process for all new social media accounts for Fisheries' programs, science centers, and regions. Approval of these accounts is not automatic. It will be based on discussions with the applicant/s and the submission of an 'operating plan' following that discussion. Contact the Fisheries Communications Office for a sample operating plan template.
- All operating plans for Fisheries social media accounts:
 - Must have high-level management approval before they are submitted to the Fisheries Communications Office at headquarters.
 - Must be reviewed and approved by the Fisheries Communications Office at headquarters before an application can proceed to DOC.
- After the operating plan is approved by Fisheries, the designated point of contact for the plan will be referred to the DOC social media website to apply for DOC approval.
- Once an application/account receives DOC approval, the social media account can be established. See 'How to Contribute' and 'How to Participate' Supplements for further guidance.
- Once established, Fisheries social media accounts must be run in accordance with the operating plan as approved by the NOAA Fisheries Office of Communications.
- The management of program, region, or science center social media accounts at Fisheries are the responsibility of a designated point of contact as stated in the operating plan.
- The clearance/approval process for the content posted to any Fisheries social media platform is the responsibility of the designated point of contact for that account.
 - For headquarters/national Fisheries accounts, the point of contact is Kate Naughten or a designee in the Fisheries Communications Office at headquarters.
 - For each program, region, or science center account, the point of contact is specified in the operating plan for that account.
- If a Fisheries social media account is not operated in accordance with the operating plan—or the DOC and NOAA Fisheries' policies—the account will be shut down.
- All Fisheries accounts must publish, reflect, and enforce NOAA's standard "commenting guidelines." Contact the Fisheries Communications Office for further guidance.
- Fisheries' staff should avoid direct responses to criticisms posted on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube hosted by the agency. The need for a response should be discussed with the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office first and posted only by the manager of the Facebook page.

Measuring Effectiveness: Prepare and share regular status reports with respective communications staff. Using metrics to track effectiveness of social media platforms will allow for improvements. Relevant indices can serve as measures of the success of the social media accounts, such as number of followers or fans, number of comments, mentions and/or likes, number of posts per day/month/year, number of homepage visits referred by specific social media platforms.

Department of Commerce-Approved Social Media Platforms:

Go to the [DOC Social Media Approved Services Page](http://www.osec.doc.gov/webresources/socialmedia/DOC_Approved_Agreements.html) for the latest list. The URL is:
http://www.osec.doc.gov/webresources/socialmedia/DOC_Approved_Agreements.html

For further information on implementation and guidelines refer to:

- Supplement 05-102-01 How to Participate in Social Media at NOAA Fisheries.
- Supplement 05-102-02 How to Contribute Content to NOAA Fisheries' Existing National Social Media Platforms.

Approval signature

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September 7, 2012

Sam Rauch, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries (Acting)

Date